

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

WHAT HE COST HER.

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"HALVES," &c.

CHAPTER XVI. IN WHICH GRACIE'S CHARACTER IS DISCOVERED AND DEFINED.

THE old gentleman released his hold upon the door, and, drawing his chair between the two young ladies in a very sociable manner, touched his right ear, as an intimation that that was his best one, and placed it, as it were, at Ella's disposal. It was almost as bad as having an ear-trumpet offered one, the effect of which, upon the unaccustomed mind, is paralysis of the tongue; and, considering that Ella was already at her wits' end as to how to introduce her subject, the situation was certainly an embarrassing one.

"These are the specimens of dyes," observed the old gentleman, touching the cabinet on the table, and speaking in anything but the tone of a Tartar—"more like a wicked old Turk," as Gracie afterwards declared. No doubt his object was to set both his visitors at their ease, but his attentions were certainly most devoted to Ella. "The colours are very brilliant, are they not; this scarlet, for instance?"

"I don't care for scarlet," said Ella.

"Well now, that's curious," observed the old fellow, "for I don't care for scarlet either."

"It reminds me of poppies and soldiers," continued Ella; "and I prefer something useful."

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Landon, "those are quite my sentiments: but in your case—being a young lady—I am surprised——"

Here was a knock at the door, and the

clerk of the passage pushed his head in, with, "Mr. Vilette to see you, sir."

"I will be with him in five minutes or so; ask him to wait. And what is your opinion, miss, as to colours?" inquired Mr. Landon, turning sharply upon Gracie, and regarding her not without considerable interest, though she at once assumed the tint to which he had so decided an objection.

"Well, I think the blue," said Gracie at a venture.

"Um, that's not my colour," returned the old gentleman, in dissatisfied tones. "What's your favourite, my—I mean, Miss Ray?" And this time he turned his eyes, not his ear, to Ella, quite briskly.

"I am not Miss Ray, Mr. Landon; that is Miss Ray."

"Indeed? I should have thought you were the elder. Well, now, which is the dye you—no, I don't mean that, of course—but what is the tint out of all these that you prefer?"

Ella looked at the cabinet with a pretence of great attention, and with an aspiration of genius suggested by the Welsh wig, exclaimed: "Drab. It's not a striking colour, of course; but it wears well, and that's the main point."

"You are the most sensible young woman I have met for years!" cried the old gentleman, admiringly. "Your choice does you infinite honour, for it suggests good common sense. You're an excellent little housekeeper, I'll warrant."

"I hope to be one soon, sir," said Ella, demurely.

"Oh dear me; then somebody's a lucky dog," said the old gentleman, roguishly.

"He has a good father, sir, which is certainly something to be thankful for."

"Egad, that's news to hear nowadays,"

ejaculated the old fellow with a harsh laugh. "My own experience is that sons care deuced little about their fathers, or their fathers' wishes, and are grateful for nothing that is done for them. It's all take and no give with them—not even thanks."

"Perhaps they are sometimes misunderstood," said Gracie, timidly, conscious of having done little up to this point to further her friend's interest, and thinking she had found her opportunity.

"There's no misunderstanding at all about it, miss!" cried the old gentleman, furiously. "'It's flat,' 'I won't,' and 'I shan't.' When a tom-cat flies in your face, you don't talk of his misunderstanding."

"I would never marry a man who flew in his father's face," observed Ella, decisively.

"Quite right, quite right, my dear," said the old gentleman, approvingly. "However, this is not business, and I have very little time to spend, even in such charming society."

He set his wig straight, which had been pushed a little awry, when Ella and he leant over the cabinet together, and his voice became suddenly hard and metallic. "It is very strange that you young ladies should have been commissioned to treat; but who are the parties? What do they want? Do I know their names?"

"Yes, Mr. Landon, you know their names."

"I thought so; otherwise the proceeding would have been most unusual. 'Ray, Ray;' your name is not familiar to me."

"That is Miss Ray, sir, I am no relation, only an intimate friend. My name is Ella Mayne."

"Why, that's the girl my son is making a fool of himself about!" cried the old gentleman, rising from his seat, and speaking very angrily. "You said you were come about a contract." Yet even then he turned and scowled at Gracie, not at Ella.

"Yes, sir; but it was a marriage contract," murmured Ella, demurely. "I came to assure you that I could not become your son's wife without your approbation. He is not so disobedient as you imagine. He will do anything—anything to please you."

"Such as giving up Miss Mayne?" snapped the old gentleman; "well, let him begin with that then."

"Well, no, sir, he thought of beginning his new course of obedience and duty by giving up his present profession, which is as distasteful to me as it is to you, and coming into partnership, or to assist you in your business in any way you thought proper."

"Are you sure of this, young woman?"

"He has passed his word to me, sir, to that effect. I have used my influence, such as it is, to persuade him to this course; and if you are still obdurate as regards our marriage, I shall at least have had the satisfaction of having reconciled to a loving father—for I am sure you do love him dearly, as he loves you—the man I love best in the world."

"There seems to be a deal of loving in you, Miss Ella," sneered the old man, but there was a tenderness mingled with the sneer which took away half its sting. "You are a couple of babies, you and he: mere babies. In your case, indeed, it doesn't make so much difference. I don't object to youth in women—"

"If you please, sir," said the clerk, looking in again, "Mr. Vilette says—"

"Go to the devil," roared the old gentleman; and the obedient clerk incontinently fled, and was beheld no more.

"I say, Miss Ella, that my son is a mere boy at school."

"It is true he is at present but a gentleman-cadet," urged Ella, "but he may be a member of your house to-morrow, if you choose to make him so. It would be a great position, but I am not asking it on my own account, dear Mr. Landon. If I could have brought myself to be the cause of a breach between you and Cecil, there would have been no material obstacles to our union. I have twenty-eight thousand pounds of my own, and perhaps if that were added to his capital in business—"

"No, Miss Ella, no," interrupted the old man with dignity. "Our house is in want of no woman's money. That would be settled on you and the children, that is supposing—no, no, I don't mean that—for the two young ladies were cochineal—" "I mean, supposing I were ever brought to consent to this marriage."

"Oh, sir, I think you have consented," exclaimed Gracie, pleadingly.

"I have done nothing of the kind, Miss—Miss what's your name?" replied the old gentleman very irritably. "Girls have no business to think, nor boys either. It is their fathers who should think for them: but I daresay your father doesn't open his mouth in his own house."

At this fancy picture of the commissary, Ella, afraid to laugh, experienced all the premonitory signs of suffocation, and even Gracie, though very much alarmed, could not restrain a smile. "Yes," he went on, "to you, and such as you, miss, I fear

filial obedience is only a matter for jesting. Whereas in the case of your friend here, Miss Ella—though I have a bone to pick with her still, and don't intend to forgive her yet by any means; and have not given in at all, mind that, or promised my consent in any way to her union with my son—in her case, I say, I will answer for her, that she has at least shown herself to be a good daughter. That she is submissive and tractable, and obeys as well as loves her father—Bless my soul, what's the matter with her?"

Ella's dark face—for though so beautiful it was very dark, being almost of Spanish hue—had grown pale to the very lips.

"She has lost her father, Mr. Landon," whispered Gracie.

"Then why didn't you tell me so before?" snapped the old gentleman; poor Gracie, it seemed, was always doomed to excite his ire; "your neglect, you see, has caused me to give her pain. It is not, however, given to the memory of every father to excite such emotion. Ella, my dear, since you have shown yourself so good a daughter, I had almost a mind to say—if this son of mine is really prepared to listen to reason, and to put his shoulder to the wheel of commerce at once—that I will accept you for my daughter-in-law. I owe you something for having brought the tears to your pretty eyes."

"I shed no tears, sir," said Ella, in that hard, almost defiant tone, with which her friend was by this time not wholly unfamiliar, though its strangeness never failed to strike her.

"Well, if you didn't cry, you lost your colour; and that showed me, you know, there was something amiss in the fabric—I mean that I touched upon a tender string. I say, if you'll bring Cecil here, a penitent, and prepared to obey my wishes, we may all three, perhaps, go into partnership together—he with me, and you with him."

"Dear Mr. Landon, how good you are!" exclaimed Ella, the colour returning to her cheeks in a sudden flush, and the lovelight sparkling in her eyes.

"Yes, how good you are!" echoed Gracie, trembling with delight at her friend's success.

"I daresay," answered the old gentleman, sardonically. "I am afraid, Miss Ray, you are one of those young ladies who think every man good whom you have succeeded in twisting round your little finger. I feel I have been made a fool of, but I know which of you has done it. It

would never have entered into Ella's head—that I am convinced—to play such a trick upon me."

"Well, really," began Gracie, her gentle nature moved by a justifiable indignation—then she stopped, feeling that it was Ella's part to defend her from so unfounded an accusation.

"Well, you see, dear Mr. Landon," said Ella gravely, "it was only natural that Gracie should interest herself in her friend's happiness."

"Aye, I see," said the old gentleman. "In other words, your friend is a born match-maker; well, that is a weakness which she inherits in common with nineteen-twentieths of her sex, so we will say no more about it; and now, since the contract is arranged—you rogues—there is nothing more to be done except to sign and seal." Whereupon he kissed them both.

"There!" cried he triumphantly, while Ella laughed, and Gracie looked rather resentful (though none the less pretty upon that account), "if I have been deceived, I have got something out of the transaction. I have now no more time to waste, so you must both be off; and mind, Ella, I have a line from Cecil by the second post to-morrow. There is only one thing I am afraid you will object to—"

"There is nothing, dear Mr. Landon," interrupted Ella, softly, "if you only say you wish it."

"Well, I don't know," said the old gentleman, screwing his eyes up tighter than ever, and with his face in a thousand puckers, "if my son does intend to take to business, I should like him to become domestic also; and as soon as possible. This marriage of yours must come off immediately."

"Since it is to oblige you, dear Mr. Landon—" answered Ella, demurely.

"There, get along with you both," interrupted the old gentleman with a grin; "and if ever that fool Withers admits ladies again into my waiting-room, I'll have him drowned in an indigo vat."

With that he opened the door, and dismissed his visitors with a curt nod (for the benefit of Mr. Withers), such as he was wont to use when parting with business clients.

The next moment Ella and Gracie found themselves in the lift, descending smoothly, and clasped in each other's arms.

"You are the most wonderful girl that ever was," whispered Gracie, admiringly.

"And you are the best, my darling. I

am afraid my papa-in-law that is to be was very rude to you."

"Well, he was—rather," said Gracie, candidly. "The very sight of me, or, at all events, any word I ventured to speak, seemed to have the same effect on him as a red rag on a bull."

"Well, you see he doesn't like scarlet," said Ella, the remembrance of her fortunate choice of colours striking her very comically. "The fact is, you were the—what-do-you-call-'em?—the man who waves the flag, and enrages the animal; while I was the matador who brings him down. In fact he was irritated at our little deception—well, at my deception, then, if you prefer to call it so—and not liking to be angry with me, he gave you the whole benefit of his indignation. He wouldn't have kissed you, you know," she added, slyly, "if he hadn't liked you."

"I thought that very impertinent," said Gracie, gravely; and then she gave expression to the opinion above mentioned, that the character of Mr. Landon, senior, was of a Turkish type.

Ella, full of high spirits, had almost remarked, "Never mind, Gracie, I will not tell Mr. Darall," but fortunately she restrained herself, and substituted for that observation, "Oh, it is only his way, and I confess I like it immensely."

"I don't like it at all," said Gracie, still ruffled by the indignity.

"Then consider you have suffered for my sake, my darling."

"I am not sure I would go through it again, even for that," returned Gracie, laughing aloud, however, in spite of herself.

"He did 'scrub,'" said Ella, thoughtfully. "Now, Cecil——"

"For shame!" said Gracie; "I won't hear anything about it."

But both the young ladies laughed very pleasantly for all that, so that the cab in which they drove through Wethermill-street was likened by a young City wit to a musical-box on wheels. By the time they had reached the steamboat wharf, however, they had got very grave again in discussing Ella's future.

"By-the-bye, I suppose," said Gracie, suddenly, "Mr. Cecil Landon has quite made up his mind as to leaving the army, and taking to a commercial life?"

"Well, he knows nothing of the proposition at present," returned Ella, quietly.

"But, oh Ella, how can you be sure?"

"Well, Cecil is very good, my dear; that of course he is in the usual accept-

ance of the term, but also in the sense in which his father said men were good in your eyes." And she imitated the winding of floss silk upon her little finger.

CHAPTER XVII. A DEAD LIFT.

ON the evening of the visit of the two young ladies, Cecil looked in at Hawthorne Lodge as usual, having obtained leave from Sir Hercules to do so at the request of Colonel Juxon, who had been urged to use his influence to that end by Ella—which is the house-that-Jack-built system in vogue everywhere where interest is made.

One of the effects of it was to bring Mr. Cecil Landon under the governor's eye without reference—which was hitherto unprecedented—to his crimes and peccadilloes; and the consequence was, that the old warrior somewhat "cottoned" to the young fellow, and repented of the opinion that he had formed to his prejudice. There was a certain bright audacity—even his enemies had no worse name for it than an "agreeable impudence"—about Cecil, which took the fancy of most men, and still more of women.

"If the lad had a little more sense of discipline," Sir Hercules had observed to the colonel—whom we should say, however, he imagined to be personally attached to Landon—"he would make a deuced fine soldier."

"Horse soldier," said the colonel, cynically.

"Well, yes, perhaps I should have said 'horse soldier;'" and the two old fellows wagged their heads, in a manner that was far from complimentary to the cavalry branch of Her Majesty's service.

"There is something frank and dashing about him, however," continued the governor; "a certain freedom——"

"Damn his impudence, yes," broke in the colonel. "He would make a most excellent officer, if we had war with the Amazons: he would do great execution among the women, I have no doubt."

From which outbreak Sir Hercules Plummet, K.C.B., began to understand that he had been mistaken as to the personal interest felt by his old companion-in-arms, in Gentleman-cadet Landon. This by no means, however, altered his own views with respect to him; and the more so, since Ella happened to sit next to Sir Hercules at dinner, one evening about this period, and made herself especially agreeable to him. The tough old general had a tender spot in his heart still, and had

been always on terms of amity with the Amazons, with the exception of his own Thalestris—Lady Plummet.

"Why, Cecil dear, what makes you so radiant?" inquired Ella, as the young fellow came smiling into the little drawing-room, the colonel being conveniently occupied with his cigar in the adjoining apartment. "You must be the bearer of some good news."

"To see you, darling, is to become radiant—by reflection," returned Cecil gallantly; "but you are so far right that I have just been put in good spirits by Sir Hercules—and a very jolly old fellow he is, when you come to know him. He says that, provided I don't 'make a fool of myself as usual'—that was his way of putting it—there is every probability of my 'going out' in the same batch with Darall, and quite on the cards that I shall get the Sappers."

"I thought you didn't want to get the Sappers," replied Ella, tapping his cheek with the bouquet he had just brought for her, as his custom was. "I am afraid you are a little changeable, dear Cecil."

"Not I; I am as constant as the needle to the north. But, somehow, I have got to like old Darall so much, that I would do almost anything to keep with him."

"What, even work?"

"Yes, even work, Ella. I hate plan-drawing, and all that, but still, if we got in the same corps, we should be at Chatham together ever so long; and then," added he, with a briskness that betrayed the after-thought, "in case the governor proves implacable, one gets choice of quarters in the Engineers, so that even quite poor fellows in it get on very well, as married men."

"But we shall not be quite poor, in any case, Cecil."

"Well, of course not; but I shall feel more comfortable if I bring some grist to our mill that way, however little. One doesn't like to be entirely dependent, even upon one's wife."

"Doesn't one?" said Ella gravely. "I think, when two become one, there should be no thought as to which of them supplies the mere money. However, I should indeed regret if I should prove the cause of what should have been your own being directed from you to other channels. It would, believe me, dear Cecil, embitter a cup however otherwise crowned with happiness."

"Oh, don't think of that, Ella. What is any inheritance compared with the

future I have found in you? Moreover, I shall have one thing that even my father cannot give me—a certain position. I know you laugh at all that with your advanced ideas; but I confess that to have 'cut the shop,' as the vulgar say——"

"Don't say what the vulgar say, Cecil," interrupted Ella gravely, "it does not become you. And remember 'cutting the shop,' as you have expressed it, involves more or less an estrangement from a kind and loving father; the heaviest cross he has to bear in life is the fact that your ways in it and his are divided. Oh, dear Cecil, why should it be so?"

"Why should it? You wouldn't have me take to dyeing, I suppose? The thought sometimes comes across me that the very uniform I wear may have been in my father's vats, and I assure you it gives me quite a shudder."

"I cannot understand that feeling, dear Cecil; and we will not argue about it. Supposing, however, that you are ashamed of your father's trade; is there not a greater shame in the being alienated from your father's heart?"

"Oh! there is no alienation; the governor and I are not bad friends," said Cecil carelessly. "He takes his way, and I mine—that's all. We are both perhaps a trifle obstinate: and it's just as well that we should not be too much together. He gets on very well without me, you may take my word for it. He is not quite so sentimental, I don't say as you, because you are all sentiment, but as you imagine him to be, my darling."

"He is very fond of you, Cecil," said Ella softly.

"Yes, he is fond of me, I daresay, in a sort of way. But you don't understand, dear Ella—you have not had to deal with a governor who has not a single idea in common with yourself, and who insists upon your accepting his views. Here is the question of our marriage, for instance. You think he will give in, but I know better."

"Cecil, darling," cried Ella, putting a little hand on each of his shoulders, "your father has given in."

"What? Have you heard from him? It is inconceivable."

"He has seen me, spoken to me—kissed me! I went up yesterday to Wethermill-street, and bearded the lion in his den; I call him so because of his magnanimity. His roar is worse than his bite, Cecil. He was very kind, and gentle, and good to me."

"And you mean to say, you cunning

puss, you have really got the governor's consent to our marriage. How did you manage it? Did you venture on the expedition all alone? And how did you pass the enchanted portal? I have always found a dragon of a clerk in the passage, who wants to know my business with my own father. Everything is business, business, business, in that hateful hole."

"I found a great deal of pleasure there," said Ella quietly. "But to be sure I made a conquest. If you jilt me, sir, your papa will marry me to-morrow."

"I have no doubt of it—who wouldn't?" replied Cecil fondly. "I can scarcely, however, believe your story yet. It seems like an incongruous dream, or an extravaganza on the stage. The idea of such a beautiful fairy venturing into such a place as Wethermill-street! A Cave of Invoices! The Den of the Dyer! Coloured Effects! Subjugation of the Enchanter by means of Natural Beauty unaided by his wares! Vat's Vat, or The Mystery—which I am still 'dyeing' to hear. I believe I could have written punning extravaganzas myself, if my martial soul had not cried 'To arms!'"

"I am glad my news has put you into such good spirits, darling; though I won't have you laugh at your father. If he is an enchanter, he is a good one, and we have every cause to be thankful to him. His evident delight at being reconciled to you—though he would fain have concealed it, for he is as proud and masterful as somebody else—would have gone to your heart, I know. He has consented to our marriage upon one condition, which, though you may think it a little hard at first—"

"Condition!" interrupted Cecil quickly, "what condition?"

"Well, darling, we must give up that programme of our future—I shall be sorry for your sake, though not for my own—and consent to leave the army."

"What! and go into the dyeing trade!"

"Well, yes, my darling, instead of the killing trade."

She spoke with a light smile, which was not, however, reflected in Cecil's face.

"That is quite impossible," he answered curtly. "When my father made that a condition of promising his consent to our marriage, he knew he would never be called upon to fulfil his promise. He was very sure that I would not perform my part of the contract. He has deceived you, Ella, and knowingly deceived you."

"No, Cecil, it is I who have deceived him. I thought that, for my sake, you would not have hesitated to sacrifice your own inclinations so far; and I promised for you."

She had drawn herself up to her full height, and her tones had an unaccustomed firmness and dignity. Cecil cast down his eyes in the presence of that reproachful gaze, and followed the pattern of the carpet with his foot.

"You should not have promised for me," said he, sullenly.

"I trusted in your word, Cecil," answered she coldly; "it was there, it seems, that I made the mistake."

"In my word, Ella? I do not understand you. I never undertook—I don't say directly, but even by implication—to make such a sacrifice; to undergo such a humiliation. For your sake, of course, I would submit to almost anything—"

"Yesterday, Cecil, in this very room," interrupted she, "you said these words: 'I would do anything—anything—to oblige my father, except give my darling up.' It was upon the faith of them that I went up to Wethermill-street to-day."

"Did I really use those words?" said Cecil hesitatingly.

"You did. Did you think I was likely to forget them—Oh! Cecil, Cecil," she suddenly broke forth, "is my love then of such little worth, that it cannot be weighed against a few years of distasteful toil? Nay, it will not be toil; a few hours a day, perhaps, passed in the City instead of the camp. Your future will be assured, and—what is better far, believe me, than any fortune—your place assured in your father's heart. If such a consideration does not move you, it will be useless, I fear, for me to add, as an inducement, that your father wishes us to be married immediately."

It was her turn now to cast down her eyes, and for her lover to lift his to her blushing face. She had felt that she was playing her last card, but it was a winning one.

"My darling," cried he, folding her in his arms, "I will go to Wethermill-street to-morrow, if you are really to come with me."

His lips did not utter another word, being otherwise employed.

"Ahem, ahem!" cried the colonel, who entered the room a few minutes afterwards, with no little precautionary noise, but which nevertheless had not had the desired effect. "I really can't crack my throat

with any more ahems. I never saw two young people so very much engaged as you are; never!"

"The occasion must excuse us, colonel," said Landon, who had certainly considerable presence of mind—"The cheek of a whole regiment of dragoons," was his host's term for it—"but the fact is, my father has to-day given his consent to our marriage."

"The devil he has," said the colonel, in no very congratulatory tone of voice.

"Thank you, Uncle Gerard, for your felicitations," said Ella, with a pretty curtsy.

Then they all three had a hearty laugh, and two of them at least a happy evening.

But when Cecil had gone, and Ella had retired to her room, the smile faded from her lips, just as it had done the night before, and a shadow quenched the sunshine of her heart. The cause was not the same, though the same cause for sadness still existed. Her present pain arose from the very contemplation of her present happiness, or, rather, of the manner in which it had been secured. She could not forget the gloom that had come over Cecil's face, when she mentioned the condition of his father's consent to their union. With such a bliss in prospect—though it was true he had not then been told how near it was—his face should have worn no gloom. What conditions would have chilled her tone, or dulled the lovelight in her eyes? "None, none," her heart replied with passionate beat. Was she giving, then, more of love than she was receiving? A question not to be asked; and yet, as she sat at her open window, under the quiet stars, she felt compelled to put it, and to have it answered. She had had to remind him of his words of promise, and even then he had hesitated to fulfil them. She felt ashamed and humbled. There had been a moment, though her tones had—she thanked Heaven—been gentle even then, and her gaze loving, when she had felt far from humble, when her heart was full of scorn and passion, and it had cost her a great effort to keep voice and eye in subjection. With many a pair of lovers there have been, doubtless, such times with one or the other, when a word or a look—speaking the truth within them—would have divided their ways for ever; but it seemed to poor Ella that it had been the case with her alone of all fond maidens. If she had spoken her mind, those words—she felt it—would

have been the last between her and him to whom her whole being was devoted. She had not spoken them, it was true, and that burning indignation, and jealousy of she knew not what, had passed away from her soul for that time; but might they not return on some other occasion, and prove her ruin?

She had carried her point, but she had had to use her last argument; she had been victorious, but not without the help of her reserves. And was there not future danger to her in the victory itself? There came into her mind something that her uncle had once told her about the tests applied to bridges: how a very great strain—greater, it was hoped, than they would ever have to bear—was made upon them, and if they bore it, they were judged strong enough.

"But does not such a strain weaken the bridge?" she had inquired.

"Undoubtedly it does," he had replied; "but that is the only way we have of properly testing them."

She had tested her bridge, and it had carried her over in safety. But had not the experiment weakened it? For the moment Cecil was her slave. The immediate prospect of his bliss had mastered him. If it had failed to do so, she would have been powerless indeed. Blinded by passion he had consented—though not without resistance—to embrace a calling that was hateful to him. But when the passion had passed away, and the calling remained, how would it be with him; and might he not repent of the sacrifice?

At present Cecil felt certainly no repentance, though his view of the case was not, perhaps, exactly as Ella pictured it. He walked back to the Academy with heart elate and step as light as air.

"Darall, old fellow," cried he, breaking in upon his friend, who was working in his room as usual, "I have been and done it."

"Done what?" inquired Darall, with a glance at the other two occupants of the apartment, who were apparently fast asleep; but you can never tell when a cadet is asleep, nor—perhaps it should be added—did Darall know what Landon might have done.

"I'm as bad as married. You have heard of dying for love. Well, I have given up my profession for love, and become a dyer."

"I don't believe it," was the quiet reply.

It cost his friend a great deal of explanation and protestation before he did believe

it, and even then the result was not perfectly satisfactory.

"Well, I hope you know your own mind, old fellow," were Darall's concluding words.

TWOSHOOES TRIES IT ON.

VERY ingenious had been the method by which 39,999 Thomas Twoshooes had escaped from the convict prison at Talkham. It was while he was at work with a gang of four-and-twenty others, wheeling bricks from the kiln to a far-off stack—a long procession, barrow following barrow, and one end of the line of men almost beyond the vision of the warder at the other. Twoshooes' notion was that he himself should be built into the stack. Thus temporarily entombed, he might elude the searchers till night came, and brought with it a quiet chance of stealing away.

Pluck and inventive genius are esteemed even by convicts, and his companions readily promised him their help. Seizing a favourable opportunity, Twoshooes left his barrow and bestowed himself, full length, on top of the stack; a friend placed two planks over him, to save him from being crushed by the weight of the bricks which nimble fingers quickly built above him. More and yet more; the barrows came and went, and the bricks flowed in a stream that seemed perennial. Long before he was missed Twoshooes was effectually concealed from sight.

But now Mr. Tightlock realises the terrible truth. He is "a man short."

"Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five—"

No, not twenty-five, my friend. Count them as often as you please, you cannot make the number up. The twenty-fifth is Thomas Twoshooes, and he has undoubtedly disappeared.

Then followed shrill whistles of alarm, shot answering shot, the clanging of a distant bell, hurrying footsteps racing to and fro, anxious voices, as the pursuers in hot search draw every covert for the missing man. All about the brickfield they range; in among the brick "hacks," through the long rank grass that grows up the clay heaps; in dry holes, and pits knee-deep with stagnant mud; round about the very brickstack itself wherein their quarry lay hid. They are like hounds at fault, these pursuers; casting here and there, hunting high and low; and yet unable

to come upon the scent, although, in truth, it was under their noses, close at hand.

Meanwhile, Twoshooes lay close, and in spite of his constrained position—he might have been a big brick himself, as still and motionless as his millions of neighbours—chuckled at the trick he had played his keepers. He was uncomfortable, of course; but he had only to bide his time. Patiently he waited through the long hours—waited and listened to the prison-bell which tolled the passing hours; it rang out the "Recall from labour," the time for the evening meal, the time for taking down hammocks and setting the night guard.

This was his time: it had come with the last bell. Everything was quiet now and snug for the night. Now with infinite caution he prepared to set himself free. No easy task. At first he could not move, not a finger; he had been too securely hidden; the superincumbent weight of bricks refused to stir. Was he doomed, then, to suffocation within a living grave just when escape seemed near at hand? With one supreme effort he succeeded in loosening the plank above; the bricks rattled down noisily, and he was free. Free, but afraid to emerge as yet. The stack might be watched; the noise would betray him. No. The coast was clear, he was stiff in every limb, torn and bleeding; but he ran swiftly, in spite of fatigue, to a spot where, weeks before, he had hidden a ragged pair of blanket trousers, made on purpose for such a chance as this. Then in all haste to the river's edge; he swam across; divested himself of his convict clothes, and made his way, fast as his failing strength would suffer him, down to the sea-coast, whence he embarked and landed at Fort Needham, as Prince Boltikoff, with the consequences already described.*

And now he was once more in durance. The chances all against him too, his character known as a successful prison-breaker, and he himself subject to peculiar disabilities as the penalty of his recent evasion. It was not only that they shut him up for days in a semi-dark cell, with bread only to eat and water for his drink; but when this was over, and he rejoined his comrades on the works, every one was warned to watch him; and, to make the process easier, he was clothed in a bright yellow suit—the peculiar brand of his recent offence; worse still, they loaded

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 16, p. 606, "Prince Boltikoff."

him with chains, handicapping him, so to speak, with extra weight for the race he seemed so ready to run.

These chains, how irksome they were! Basils were riveted on to his ankles; and between them hung a cumbrous load of rattling links, from which, night or day, sleeping or waking, it was doomed that he should never be free.

He was a cunning old convict was Mr. Thomas Twoshoes, having had much experience in many prisons and in many lands. This present punishment was not to be endured for long, not if he could possibly help it. But how to rid himself of this intolerable incubus of iron? Escape by actual flight was now out of the question; they would not give him another chance. But could he not compass his release from fetters, if not from the prison? He was up to every move; one or another might benefit him.

Why not "try it on?"

Next morning, when standing on parade preparatory to marching out to work, Twoshoes dropped suddenly, as if he had been shot. A few short, convulsive kicks, and then he lay, to all appearance, lifeless and stone cold. They lifted him up carefully, and carried him to the hospital. The "young" doctor, the assistant, came post-haste. Twoshoes was stripped, his irons removed; he was laid in a warm bed, restoratives were applied, but all to no purpose. Rigid in every limb, ghastly white, it seemed as life was, indeed, extinct. And yet his heart beat, the temperature of his body was normal, his tongue was clean.

The "young" doctor was fairly puzzled. Next appeared the senior surgeon, a hard-headed old gentleman, not easily imposed upon.

"A fit, eh? Bring some hot water—scalding hot—from the boiler, sharp's the word. It's the only chance." He spoke in loud peremptory tones. "Stay; I'll go with you;" and presently he returned, followed by a nurse carrying a huge can, and a sponge.

"Try it with the thermometer; what does it register—one hundred and ninety-two degrees? That will do. Now, Hoskins, mind your fingers; throw it over him. There!"

Splash went the contents of the can over the prostrate Twoshoes. The effect was instantaneous.

He jumped from the bed, yelling, screaming, swearing, threatening, all in a breath. He was burnt, scalded to death, the skin

was peeling from his body; he could not live in such torments.

"Cold water! ice!" he cried with stentorian voice.

"You've had it," said the doctor, coolly. "That water wasn't hot. It came straight from the pump; and you're a humbug, Twoshoes; you were only 'trying it on.'"

He had been trying to "best the croaker," but the "croaker," as the doctor is styled, had got the "best" so far. Twoshoes suffered a long detention on short allowance for this unsuccessful trick, and then they put on his chains again and sent him back to his work.

Two days later they found him hanging by the neck in his cell. He was cut down promptly. Life was not yet extinct. A few simple remedies restored consciousness, and, after he had been left for an hour to reflect calmly upon the crime he had nearly committed, the chaplain came to comfort him.

Twoshoes was penitent. He saw his error, he said. It was remorse, bitter remorse for a past sin. The memory of a great crime—an undiscovered crime, which he had committed a few years before—pressed down on him with a weight so awful that he could no longer endure to live. His life was a burthen to him, so sorely did his conscience smite him. When he lay alone in his narrow cell in the silent night-watches, the terrible recollection of the deed he had done goaded him nearly to madness.

"Last night's torture was the keenest, sir, of all I ever endured. My despondency and self-reproach rose to such an agonising height that I determined to make away with myself. You know the rest. But it is better so; it is better that I should live, till I meet the extreme penalty of the law, which is no more than I deserve for my crime."

Then he proceeded, with tears of contrition, to confess it all.

That Tooley-street murder—did his reverence remember it? The hideous details, the mutilation, the absence of motive, and the terrible mystery which hung over it, baffling every effort of the police, even to this very day?

"It was my act, sir," went on Twoshoes, burying his face in his hands. "I murdered her in cold blood; the brand of Cain is upon me; I can never have a moment's peace again, never again, never, not on this side of the grave."

The good man, true to his sacred calling, poured in consolation, and tried his best

to soothe the anguish of this erring but repentant soul. Then, when Twoshoes was somewhat calmer, the chaplain left him, and went to make his report to the governor of the prison.

"I don't believe a word of it," said the governor, shortly.

"But the story is so circumstantial, all the details are so complete. The man himself is so evidently under the influence of a strong feeling—" The chaplain pleaded hard.

"It's an old game, my dear Mr. Bishop, old as the hills. I have had dozens of such cases before me; and they are all alike—mere shams."

"But what object could the man have in assuming guilt that is not his?"

"Object? To avoid work; to get moved to a county-prison, to be tried over again—to escape the cross irons he is just now wearing on his legs—What is it, Mr. Bayliss?" This to a warder who came to the door.

"The noose, sir; that which yon Twoshoes wanted to hang himself with."

"What of it?"

"D'ye see this knot, sir? The rogue never meant the noose to run tight."

"He never meant to hang himself?" inquired the chaplain, eagerly, but his face fell.

"No, sir, he was only 'trying it on.'"

Once more Twoshoes had missed his mark, although the chaplain was not satisfied about the Tooley-street crime. At his persistent representation, a full statement of the confession was forwarded to the Home Office. Meanwhile, Twoshoes returned to his work and chains.

A week or two later, the warder who had special charge of him, spoke as follows:

"I don't know what to make of that Twoshoes; gets talking to himself all day, and, when I check him, he looks that wicked I hardly durst trust him to handle a pick or shovel."

The man's conduct was certainly strange—sometimes moody and silent, at others perpetually jabbering to himself; generally with head downcast and eyes on the ground, except when, now and again, he upturned a white gleaming eyeball, with a wicked sidelong glance. Once or twice he yelled with derisive laughter, then stood on his head, so that his leg chains hung like a necklace round his neck; anon he took to devouring clay; last of all he came to Mr. Tightlock, and said he wanted to go home.

"I live over yonder," he pointed to a distant village, with spire and churchyard visible. "I want to go home."

After this he was sent into the hospital to be watched. He was doubtless "doing the barney," pretending to be mad, but of this only the doctor could give positive proof. The chaplain returned with renewed vigour to the cry of remorse. It was the memory of the murder which had driven Twoshoes out of his mind.

Shrewd old Doctor MacManus was not so ready to admit the madness. To feign insanity is a common practice with convicts; they do it with more or less ingenuity, and with more or less persistence, according to their knowledge and force of character, and if Twoshoes was "doing the barney," he did it extremely well. The doctor might have his suspicions, but they were not very readily confirmed—the imitation was so good, the part so long sustained.

At one time Twoshoes took up a parrot-like cry, which he repeated in an unvarying, lachrymose sing-song; rising now to a full diapason of sound, then sinking into a low howl, like that of a woe-begone cur baying at the moon.

"Twoshoes! Twoshoes! oh, poor Tommy Twoshoes!" This was the burthen of his refrain—continued day and night—till he drove the other patients in hospital nearly distracted; and it was necessary to remove him to the "dumb cell," a place constructed especially—a cell within a cell, the space between rammed with sand, so that not a whisper from within could reach the outer air.

Twoshoes might be mad, but he was wise enough to know that shouting would not avail him in the "dumb cell." His next act was to refuse all food. Every scrap they brought him he rejected; at first the regular diet; then, in order to test him, the doctor sent up savoury stews and toothsome sweets. Twoshoes was not to be caught in a trap. Even a glass of champagne he indignantly knocked out of the nurse's hand.

But he could not be suffered to starve himself to death. After five days they fed him with a stomach-pump, although he resisted violently. Again he showed wisdom, and relinquished an attempt which he found to be futile. He went to the other extreme; and devoured all on which he could lay hands, including his blankets torn into bits resembling pancakes, stones in the exercising-yard,

and part of the soles of his shoes. This diet ere long made him excessively ill, and he suffered such torments from indigestion that he returned gladly to more wholesome food. Now he had accessions of violent rage; he threatened every soul who approached him, he would kill the doctor as he had already murdered that woman.

"There," said the chaplain, who was told of this speech, "I felt I could not be mistaken."

But he was; for just about this time a reply was received from the Home Office, satisfactorily showing that Twoshoes was safe in another prison, at the very time he pretended he had committed the crime in Tooley-street.

This fresh proof of the convict's incorrigible duplicity roused the doctor to further efforts. It became almost a point of professional etiquette with him to find Twoshoes out. Yet was he baffled, day after day, at every turn. As a last resource he determined to try galvanism. The battery was prepared; Twoshoes was led forth grinning. To the officials he made a low bow, and expressed his thanks courteously in a few words of choice French. He was grateful for their hospitality, but would not intrude further.

"I shall go home," he said airily; but just then came the first shock from the machine.

"Wha—— what's this mean?" he spluttered out. "What 'yer doing to Tommy Twosh—— poor Tommy Twosh——"

Now he was quivering, and fairly dancing, as the currents acted on him with increasing force.

"Well?" said the doctor, when the first dose was over.

"I want to go home," replied Twoshoes.

"I think you must wait for a second application of this; once is never quite enough."

"No, no, no!" cried Twoshoes. "I chuck up the sponge. You've bested me. I'm done with trying it on."

There was no more exemplary convict in custody than 39,999 Thomas Twoshoes from thenceforth until he had "put in all his time."

A SAUNTER THROUGH A JAPANESE VILLAGE.

So much has been written, especially of late years, about Japan, and the manners and customs of its inhabitants, that the subject is rapidly becoming hackneyed;

and yet there are phases in the rustic life of the people which have escaped the notice of all the writers, from the Dutch Dr. Koempfer, who wrote at the beginning of the seventeenth century, to Mr. Campbell, whose "Circular Notes" have been published recently. Not an author, except Sir Rutherford Alcock and M. Aimé Humbert, has left the beaten tract of tourists to explore the world hidden beyond, and I offer this as an excuse to my readers for asking them to accompany me in a saunter through a perfectly old-world Japanese village.

Koyias—that is the name of our village—is but twenty-five miles from Yokohama, and yet, till within the last four years, was as utterly unknown to the majority of Yokohama settlers as the Arctic Circle.

Romantic in the extreme is the situation of Koyias. It is built on the slope of the Holy Mountain Oyama—second only in celebrity to Fuji—straggling amongst the fantastically-shaped hills which are grouped around its base; buried in a nest of ever-green foliage. The mountain torrents dash down each side of the little village street—here and there diverted from their courses, to form fountains of penance for pilgrims, or to drive the wheels of innumerable wood mills. No vehicle ever ascended this street, for the very sufficient reason that it consists of flights of steps cut out of the solid rock, so that the visitor must needs possess sturdy legs, to explore the village and ascend the mountain in the same day.

During the months of August and September, Koyias is crowded with pilgrims from all parts of Japan, bound for the summit of the Holy Mountain. Hence a very large proportion of the houses consists of hostleries—some of the higher class, decorated and standing in their own gardens, others of the lowest and meanest type, dirty and ill-smelling; but all picturesque and equally deserving the attention of the observer and artist. That which we will choose as head-quarters is a medium between these, and is distinguished by the fanciful name of the "Young Pine," and it may be taken as a very fair sample of the rustic tea-house of modern Japan, uncontaminated by the influence of visits from American rowdies and British excursionists of the objectionable type. Moreover, as it is from time to time visited by European sportsmen and explorers, one is spared many of the petty annoyances inseparable from establish-

ments of the purest native type. Japanese tea-houses have been so often described, that a description of the "Young Pine" of Koyias would merely be a recapitulation of what is already familiar to our readers, so that we will at once pass on our journey of observation.

Next door to the tea-house is the village wine-shop — a little dark, odd-cornered establishment, where the finest vintages of the land may be had retail or wholesale—at least, so says a richly-embazoned board, which is hung up conspicuously outside. The master, as he should be, is a big, roundly-built man, fond of a jest, ready with a song, and especially cunning in repartee—an accomplishment very necessary when his guests have imbibed an extra bottle or so of his choicest. He might have retired from business years ago, had he thought fit, but he prefers to hear the ring of the wine-cup and the rattle of conviviality to the monotonous dignity of retirement, and would be utterly miserable anywhere but under the shade of those huge straw-enveloped tubs, in the darkness of whose full round shapes sleep liquors of every kind, from the aristocratic "flower in full bloom" to the sour white "vin ordinaire" consumed by chair-carriers and coolies.

He is never still for a moment. If he is not attending to a customer, he is superintending the erection of a newly-arrived cask on its shelf of honour near the door, or running up his accounts with nimble fingers over the counting-board, or chaffing the barber over the way. What a business he does! Now it is Miss O Toyo from our tea-house, in quest of a bottle of "very superior" for some guest of distinction; now it is a group of thirsty, white-clad pilgrims, calling for "climbing powder," previous to their ascent of the mountain; now it is a wee toddling thing with a very big baby strapped behind her, and with an almost equally big bottle in her hand, to be filled and taken home for consumption at the family meal to-night. No credit allowed here, all is good ready money, paid on the spot—the paper carefully stowed away in a drawer, and the copper carelessly flung into a huge stem of bamboo. The shop is apparently never empty, and the threshold—protected against the invasion of evil spirits by three lines of salt drawn broad-arrow-wise upon it—is worn smooth by the feet of the customers, who are continually crossing it from morn till night.

Adjoining the wine-shop is the house of the stonemason. The traveller strange to

Japan might reasonably ask, what possible employment could there be for a stonemason in a wood-built village like Koyias. But people must die, and every Japanese, rich or poor, has a headstone placed over his grave. Moreover, there are some twenty temples and shrines in the village and neighbourhood, of which the foundations, steps, gateways, paths, courtyards, lanterns, and "Torii" or entrance arches, are continually wanting repairs. So the stonemason and his son, powdered with professional dust, may be seen here at all times, hewing and hacking away at huge shapeless blocks of the rough material; or carving the backs of tortoises, the feathers of storks, the eyes of nameless monsters; or inscribing the after-death names on the nearly finished stones. They are skilled workmen, as one may see by the way in which they turn the sharp corners of the Katakana letters; form the tremendous curves and dashes which the followers of the Nichiren sect of Buddhists affect in their monumental calligraphy; gouge out frowns and wrinkles on the face of a god; or chisel the graceful curves of the lotus leaf.

Beyond the stonemason's is a little old temple leaning back from the street, as if ashamed to show its weather-beaten front, by the side of the trim woodwork of its more modern neighbour houses. Little, old, mean-looking as it is, no pilgrim would dream of ascending the Holy Mountain without having previously paid his devotions at the shrine of Quanon—the hundred-handed god of mercy. In most Japanese temples devotees leave mementoes of their visits—gaudily-painted boards, top-knots of hair, or coils of straw-rope—but at this little Koyias shrine they carry away their mementoes, in the form of chips from the posts supporting the front entrance. On to the posts now doing duty—themselves dwindling away in the middle from the attacks of many hundreds of zealots—are tied the remains of their predecessors, hacked away to the thinness of toothpicks, and only removed when the safety of the heavy roof rendered it absolutely necessary. There is little enough to notice in the temple except its air of extreme age—rare enough in this country of fires and earthquakes. There is the usual gong suspended to the doorway, with a mouldy old rope attached, wherewith to make a noise and summon the god; a rotten old coffer for the reception of cash offering; a sort of desk at which a venerable,

filthy old priest passes his days selling rough prints of the god as charms; the once gilded statue of the god, minus several of his hundred hands, and surrounded by the usual paraphernalia of lanterns, bowls, candlesticks, and curiously-twisted metal. An aged "Mikoshi," or triumphal car, formerly carried about in state at the annual festival of the god, rots away in dust and cobwebs on one side, and the engine and insignia of a defunct fire brigade incongruously occupy the other.

An air of dilapidation and decay pervades everything, and yet the little temple is never deserted. The number of people who undergo penance is wonderful. Here is one man—evidently, from the pack on his back and his weather-beaten straw coat, come from a distance—walking to and fro between the two ends of the temple, a distance of twenty yards, with the regularity of a machine. At each end he leaves a piece of wood as a tally of his performance, and, until he has thus disposed of the bundle under his arm, his penance will not have been accomplished.

Immediately behind the temple, a torrent has been diverted from its course, to fall through a fantastically-carved dragon's mouth into a stone basin some twelve feet below. Beneath this cascade a man has been standing for the last quarter of an hour, and there he will remain till nature is exhausted. The gods of Japan are not lightly to be propitiated; women and children share with the men the fatigues of long pilgrimages, and I have met on the summit of Oyama—a climb of six thousand feet—troops of old and young ladies and small children, laughing and chattering as if scaling big mountains was an everyday diversion. Above the temple, hidden from the view by a dense growth of trees and shrubs, is the little burying-ground of the village. Save the songs of the birds, and the plashing of the rivulet below, nothing breaks the stillness of this "God's-acre" of Koyias. The village, but a hundred yards away, is ever bustling and animated, but here, over this grassy plateau, hedged in by the natural growth of dense bamboo thickets and groves of cryptomeria, camellia, and azalea, reigns perfect calm and solitude. Above is the clear, deep blue sky, so exquisite in Japan; and looking through a break in the fence of twigs, flowers, and leaves, the eye wanders over the vast plain stretching away towards Yokohama and the sea. The simplicity of the funeral monuments is quite in har-

mony with the scene. Here there is none of the bombast and display, which are sometimes so offensive in our cemeteries at home. Rude and simple as the past lives of those beneath are the stones erected over the remains of the dead villagers. Some, standing higher than the rest, and perhaps decorated with a gilded crest, denote the last resting-places of people above the social level of the ordinary tillers of the soil; but the greater part consist of little oblong blocks of stone, with the death name of the deceased, and generally, a verse of poetry, engraved thereon. All the most recent erections have saucers of water and bowls of rice in front; many graves are simply marked by a lath of wood, as ninety days must elapse after interment before a more substantial monument can be raised. It is strange that the after-death mythology of the Japanese should resemble so closely that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Corpses in Japan are attired in full travelling dress, a staff in one hand, and a few cash in the other, to pay the old woman who sits at the three roads leading to Heaven, Earth, and Hell, and who ferries them over the mystic river, just as the bodies of the Romans were buried with oboli in their hands, to pay Charon for the ferry of the Styx.

Past the temple, and over a rude bridge across the brawling torrent, is the public bath-house of Koyias. What a contrast to the quiet of the grave-yard we have just left!

Other establishments make a more imposing show, and apparently offer more solid inducements to the passer-by to enter; but, with the wine-shop, the bath-house seems to share all the public patronage. Every Japanese, of whatever position in life, contrives to take a bath at least three times a week. In the better-class houses there are regular bath-rooms, but the poorer people, who are crowded in small cottages, go to the public establishments, of which every village has one, and every town several. So at the Koyias bath-house the stream of people passing in and out—especially towards night-time—is incessant. It does not consist, as do many, of one large room common to both sexes, but is divided into two compartments, one for the men, the other for the women and children, but each equally under the eagle eye of the proprietor, who sits on a sort of rostrum placed between the two. Especially sly of movement must he or she be who

could evade his glance, and contrive to get a wash gratis; and even those whose redness of skin denotes that they have had their full time in the boiling water, are warned, and requested to make room for others. As the English merchant anticipates his dinner, and the artisan his pipe and corner at the public-house, after the toils of the day, so does the Japanese look forward to the hour of bathing as the supreme period of his daily happiness, so that at about sunset, the crush, noise, and confusion in the little bathing-house near the torrent at Koyias is indescribable. The children hate the hot water, and scream and kick as their mothers plunge them head over ears into the tank, much in the same way as do the poor little wretches we see ducked by bathing-women at Brighton or Ramsgate. The women laugh and chatter incessantly, the men shout, tumble, splash, and carry on practical jokes, till the old roof rings with the uproar, and if the noise and smell are a little overpowering, we cannot help admitting that if there is complete enjoyment anywhere, it is in this Pandemonium of a bath-house.

Next to the bath-house, but lolling back in the trees with an easy, self-satisfied air of superiority, is the house of the local "Yakunin," or mayor. Neatness is no word for the appearance of this mansion. A severe black paling encloses it, and all but screens it from the vulgar view. The gravel path—flagged at intervals with huge stones—is jealously kept free from weeds and rubbish; the sliding doors are of spotlessly white paper, set in a framework of polished wood; and within, the simplicity and utter absence of ornament or furniture is almost monotonous. Here all the local business is transacted by the elders of the village; tithes and taxes received; new laws promulgated; family quarrels settled, and criminals judged; moreover, a tall ladder fixed into the ground, to which is suspended a bell, a polished bronze ornamented engine, a pile of wooden pails, and an assortment of hooks and ladders, proclaim it to be also the local fire-station.

Our Koyias "Yakunin" is not one of the mushroom officials so plentiful in Yedo and Yokohama. His ancestors held office in Koyias long before him, and his son will succeed him, unless the eccentric government makes another dash at old institutions. He is a good specimen of the now almost obsolete race of old Japanese gentlemen. Rather than wear a

hat, coat, or boots of foreign fashion, he would resign office to-morrow; not that he bears any antipathy to foreigners; on the contrary, he admires them, "so long," as he says, "they keep themselves to themselves," and nothing can exceed the urbanity and politeness with which he receives us and answers our questions; but he possesses the faculty—as rare in modern Japan as in modern Europe—of seeing himself as others see him. The law obliges him, as a government official, to wear his hair in the European style; but after all, this only amounts to the sacrifice of a dirty, greasy, troublesome little tuft on the top of his head, and saves him a deal of time in shaving. The importance of the official documents he has occasionally to peruse warrants a better light than that afforded by the tin of oil with a wick stuck in it, usually found in Japanese houses; so he has purchased a kerosine lamp, but farther on the path of innovation he will not go. Half the awe and respect with which he is regarded by the villagers would vanish were he to discard the stiff coat with wide sleeves, embroidered with his family crest, the loose trousers and the wooden clogs, in favour of a seedy "chimney-pot" hat, a rusty dress suit, and a pair of boots many sizes too big for him, in imitation of his confrères of Yedo. As it is, he is practically the monarch of the place. Half the rice and tobacco-fields around are his, and half the farms are held by his tenants. He has the first right to hunt, shoot, and cut firewood on Mount Oyama, and he is the counterpart of what Addison considered to be the position next the gods—an English country gentleman. His sons are being educated in Yedo and England, for he is wise enough in his generation to foresee that in a few years those who mean to fight the battle of life in Japan, à la mode Japonaise, will be very speedily shouldered to the wall by those who have adopted Western notions and ideas. His daughters are fair, bright specimens of Japanese womanhood, as yet unversed in the mysteries of Western customs and dress, accomplished according to their national standard—that is, skilful on the guitar, deeply read in the poetic and romantic lore of their country, able to weave their own dresses, not above helping in the kitchen, and adepts in the art of "flowery" conversation.

Opposite the mayor's house is the little theatre of Koyias; not one of the ornate, gas-lighted playhouses of the modern

Yedo or Yokohama type, but a dark, old, ill-smelling den of the purest Japanese style. It is rarely open, as Koyias must depend for dramatic entertainment on strolling companies of actors, but as much blood and thunder may be witnessed on its boards in half an hour as one would hear of, much less see, in the actual world without during many years. The good villagers, however, can conceive nothing more magnificent than the spectacles to which they are occasionally treated. Their standard is fortunately not a very high one, and they are advocates rather for quantity than quality, so that stage tricks, effects, and feats of juggling and legerdemain, which would be hooted by a Yedo audience, are sure to meet with applause at Koyias. Travellers tell them that they should see the great theatre in Shimabarra at Yedo, or at the Yoshiwarra at Yokohama; but they don't believe it, and stick up manfully for Koyias. When the playbills with the principal scenes thereon depicted are circulated in Koyias, the excitement is intense, and during the hours of performance even the bath-house and the wine-shop are deserted; business is entirely suspended, for all Koyias is at the theatre, gaping at the grimaces of the renowned Tsunemasa, absorbed in the doings of the forty-seven Rônins, or roaring at the broad jokes of the "Ink Smearing."

Abutting on to the theatre is the "village shop," where you may buy any article useful or ornamental, from a suit of armour to a toothpick. On one shelf is a tempting array of innocent-looking indigestion, in the shape of cakes and sweetmeats; on another are masks of all devices, from the scowling features of the war-god Hachiman to the joyous face of Otafuku—plumpest of Japanese historical dames; kites in the semblance of beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles; whipping-tops, humming-tops, peg-tops, battledores as big as cricket-bats, miniature suits of armour, swords, hobby horses, and dolls dressed in the latest Yedo fashions. In another corner are kettles, charcoal-brasiers, pans, tubs, sword-racks, sun and rain hats, even a kerosine lamp, and a box of eau-de-cologne. Then there are suits of clothing for men; gorseons "obis" or sashes for women; wooden clogs and straw sandals; bedding and mats; strings of pilgrims' beads; water-gourds and staffs; books and musical instruments. In short, if the villager lacks anything, here he will find it, and nowhere else within a radius of ten miles.

Next to the village shop is the village school. Here, squatting on the mats, each with his or her little bench for writing materials, are some fifty chubby little children of both sexes, yelling, "à toutes forces," the letters of the "Iroha," or Japanese syllabary, given out in stentorian tones by the old priest teacher. He has a black-board at his side, and, as he pronounces each letter, he chalks it down, and the pupils shriek it out in a chorus of squeaking trebles. Even here, in out-of-the-way Koyias, signs of the spread of Western education have spread in the shape of slates, and after the alphabet has been duly howled through, an advanced class receives instruction in the Arabic numerals. A momentary lull marks our entrance, but at a word from the old priest, all are hard at work again; and here we may observe one of the most striking features of the national character. There is none of the levity, or anxiety to "skip," so characteristic of the British schoolboy. The master of a form in an English public school finds that, as a rule, he has more to do in maintaining attention and order than in teaching; in Japan the complaint of the foreign professors of the great Yedo schools is that their pupils show too much anxiety to learn, and that in the general craze for acquiring Western knowledge, bodily exercise is neglected. Thus one may meet during the vacations, in retired hamlets or in solitary rustic tea-houses, students, working hard, instead of profiting by their release from the lecture-room, and abandoning anything like recreation in their thirst for enlightenment.

Next door to the school, and opposite the wine-shop, is the barber's establishment. Now the proprietor of this house has long been a thorn in the side of the Koyias community. He is not a Koyias man, but a citizen of Yedo, lately settled here, and from Yedo he has brought far more refinement and foreign civilisation than the sturdy old conservative villagers think good for the social body. Look at that striped pole impudently planting its brazen head in the air. Was the like ever seen in respectable Japanese barber-shop before? He tried to introduce a chair for his customers the other day, but they one and all refused to use it, and the obnoxious object has been removed to the back room, where it serves as a plaything for the children. One man's chin he lathered with foreign soap instead of simple water, but the rustic, on perceiving it, rushed out of

the shop with one side of his face coated with white, and had the shaving operation finished at home. Still, there must be a barber in the place, and so many of his little peculiarities are tolerated. Moreover, as he is full of chit-chat and strange stories from the great capital, and is a humorous fellow to boot, he drives a roaring trade.

His greatest crony is the wine-shop keeper over the way, and the character of their friendship is peculiar, inasmuch as they belong to two distinct parties in present public opinion, and on most topics entertain diametrically contrary opinions.

Thus, the wine-shop keeper, a Koyias man by birth and education, is a stern upholder of all the old customs of the country. The barber, on the contrary, born near the great bridge of Yedo, affects an idolatry for reform. On summer evenings; as the setting sun is lighting up the distant landscape with a thousand brilliant hues; as the shadows are creeping over the great mountain side; and as the labourers are returning from their toil in the fields; right royal battles do the two politicians wage, to the amusement, not unmixed with awe, of the village gossips and tattlers. Their respective shops are the arenas for these combats, and many a man has his chin shaved unnecessarily, or calls for an extra bowl of wine, for the sake of hearing the disputants. That they never will agree is morally certain, that they never will be enemies is equally so. Your true men of calibre respect each other's genius too much to fall out about trifles, so the barber and the tapster of Koyias, though they bicker, squabble, and fight day after day, have drawn indissoluble bonds of friendship around each other by the very oppositeness of their natures. Whether the fact that the barber has a very comely daughter, named O Kiku, or Miss Chrysanthemum, has anything to do with it, looking from the point of view of the man of liquors, it is not our province to discuss; but certain it is that the aforesaid O Kiku is always present at these encounters, and invariably sides with the foe of her father. However, we have arrived at our tea-house door, where the damsels in afternoon toilette, fresh combed and painted, are waiting to inform us that our repast is ready; so we satisfy with cash the crowd of urchins who have been following us throughout at a respectful distance—for they are not quite certain that we are not beasts of biting propensities—and, obedient

to the call of our fair waitresses, ascend to our pleasant little room, to do justice to a banquet à la mode Japonaise.

ON THE WAY TO THE LIZARD.

So you've been to the Lizard this autumn, and yet have not even heard of Gunwalloe Church? That is just the way we English manage our sight-seeing—rushing about in a race against time, determined to get over as much ground as we can, and then coming home weary with our scamper and inwardly disappointed, in spite of all our efforts to feel that we've been doing the right thing.

I suppose you took a monthly tourist's ticket at Paddington (wonderfully cheap they are), and "broke your journey" at Bath. Then you probably stopped at Exeter and at Torquay, and, indeed, at so many places, that the Lizard and the Land's End very nearly had to be given up altogether. Somehow you did manage to see both our southernmost and most westerly promontory; and now, with the help of a few photographs and a good deal of make-believe, you can astonish your friends by talking about the Logan and Tol-Pedn and Kynance Cove, as glibly as if you lived within a score of miles of them.

Still it is one thing to get on the 'bus at Penrhyn, drive to Helston, take the four-horse car to the Lizard and back, and then on by another 'bus to Penzance, making your way thence to the Land's End in much the same fashion; and quite another thing to see either district as they deserve to be seen. This can only be done knapsack on shoulder and stout boots on feet. I don't blame you for wanting to see as much as you can. All I want to do is to show you "a more excellent way," convinced that if you try it once you'll be sure to try it again.

It is not a question of seeing Kynance Cove; of course everyone who goes to the Lizard sees that. Those dark-green rocks veined with red, which, when wet with spray, look like masses of blood-stone, have been the admiration of visitors ever since Dean Lyttelton discovered them, nearly a century and a half ago, while on a tour with his friend Dr. Borlase, the antiquary. "The excessive shining Whiteness of the Sand, and several small Basons full of Limpid Sea Water, the various Windings and Turnings which the different Groups of Rocks oblige you to make in traversing this splendid Court of Neptune, form a Thousand Beautys which a dull narration will give you no idea of . . .

Under these Rocks, all alike enamell'd with the most beautiful Colours, the Sea has formed Cavities large enough to admit of twenty People commodiously in each cove; from one you see a little arm of the Sea, which, at low Water, comes within less than twenty Yards of you, dashing its waves against a vast Rock that stands entirely detach'd from any other. From another Cove you have a sight of the Ocean, but agreeably interrupted on the right hand by an immense high broken Rock, detached like the former from the Rocks which join the main Land . . ." So wrote the Dean of Exeter in days when capitals were used for emphasising, instead of the superabundant adjectives of the modern penny-a-liner. The shape of the rocks, of course, is changed; but fortunately the serpentine is far harder than the red Devonshire cliff of which every winter makes such havoc. At Dawlish I found that, between two visits, "the clerk" had wholly disappeared, "the parson" had lost all his head, and "the elephant" had become a shapeless lump, whereas Dean Lyttelton's "immense high Rock" (the steeple-rock) is still recognisable, and will be so for many a year. This serpentine is hard, except where veins of soapstone (steatite) run through it and make disintegration easy. It belongs to the class of magnesian rocks, of which Southwell and York minsters (where the carving is as fresh in many parts as the day it was finished) were built, and a far less durable sample of which was chosen for the Houses of Parliament. There is not much serpentine in our country. In Cornwall, besides part of the Lizard district—not the Lizard itself, which is clay-slate—there is a patch near St. Austell, and another on Connor Downs, near Hayle; and wherever that rock occurs the so-called Cornish heath grows, and grows nowhere else.

As I said, you will of course see Kynance. Go there, if you can, in full-moon time, and after paying your respects at "the Court of Neptune," by day (half-tide is the best time for seeing "the bellows," the "post-office," and the other performing rocks), be sure to make an evening call when the tide is quite out, and the "excessive shining whiteness of the Sand" shows at its best. Then, when you have quite done the Lizard, and are walking on to Helston, keeping close to the westward coast, you will come, after passing the good-sized village of Mullion, to a wild, lonely little cove, flanked on the north by a great grass-

grown cliff, an outlier of the ill-famed Halzaphron Cliffs, which stretch on towards Looe Bar. Under this cliff stands Gunwalloe Church. No village is near it; there is, in fact, no village of the name that I ever heard of. The church goes along with Cury. Despite the law against pluralities, they are obliged to put one parson to two parishes in the Lizard country. I think there are twelve churches in the little peninsula between Looe Pool and Hilford River. A ghastly-looking little church, this Gunwalloe, almost swallowed up by the hill behind, out of which, half-a-stone's throw away from the nave, grows its tower. Under the churchyard-wall the sea creeps at high water; and there church and tower have stood in their loneliness for more than six hundred years. They say that in some terrible shipwreck no one was saved but two sisters, who clung to the cliff aforesaid and managed to clamber up to safety. Each wished the church built on the very spot where she had rested, and had knelt down to thank God for her deliverance; and so, unable to agree, and, woman-like, determined not to give in, they made a compromise by planting the church in one place and the tower in the other. It is not at all a bad church—nave and two aisles; good oak carving in the roof; remains (now turned into inner doors) of a handsome rood screen; early Norman font; and bells with quaint inscriptions. The old cross (every church, and almost every cross-road, in Cornwall has its cross), after lying for many years in the little stream that runs into the cove, has been picked out and built into the chancel-wall. Indeed, the whole church has been restored in a way that puts to shame many rich livings in home counties, with tumble-down churches and weed-grown churchyards. The parish register is worth looking at; it contains nothing for the antiquary, dating back no farther than 1716, long after which date the sexton used to be paid half-a-crown a head for killing foxes; but it tells a sad tale of the perils of the sea. Every year there are entries like this: "Sailor, marked on arm with letters G. F. M., then the figure of a heart and the letters F. P." Poor F. P.; small chance of her ever hearing of the fate of G. F. M., recorded only in the musty register of an out-of-the-way Cornish parish! Sadder still is this: "Sailor, supposed from his dress to be an officer; sailor, with three stars on left hand and other marks on right; both washed ashore, it is thought,

from a French *chasse-marée*, lost, not a soul saved, two days before." Such a coast breeds its heroes—as it used to breed its wreckers. Joseph Dale was drowned, in 1808, in rescuing one of the crew of a Hamburg ship stranded on Looe Bar; he saved his man, but died in saving him. His epitaph says:

But though his mortal part be dead
His spirit lives above,
Where he may bathe, from danger free,
In seas of heavenly love.

Old Cuttance, too, an octogenarian, shows with pride a silver cup bearing the inscription:

Oscar, King of Norway, to Henry Cuttance
of Gunwalloe,

For brave and noble actions on the 20 Nov., 1846.

That was for saving fifteen out of the crew of eighteen of the schooner *Elizabeth*, of Bergen, and also for rescuing three other Norwegians from exceeding peril. Their ship had gone to pieces in the night; three of the crew, washed against the cliff, managed (like the founders of Gunwalloe Church) to scramble up, and found a cottage where they got hospitality. Next morning all the "covers" turned out, headed by Cuttance, to look for survivors. At last they found three more men lodged in a cleft of the rock, but so benumbed that they were powerless to help themselves. Cuttance threw a cord across to them, and lowered hot coffee and bread. By-and-by a rope, with a chair slung to it, was passed down, and the men were hauled up one by one, after ten hours' exposure to wind and wave. Cuttance remembers the terrible wrecks of 1807—four ships and frigates, besides smaller vessels, being lost hereabouts; most notable the transport *Susan* and *Rebecca*, returning with one hundred and eighty light dragoons from General Whitelock's Expedition to Buenos Ayres; forty-one soldiers and sailors were drowned, though all might (says Cuttance) have been saved had they been willing to leave the ship, "on which they had lots of plunder." These forty-one were buried as shipwrecked men used to be in this Christian land—i.e., thrown into a pit near where they were washed up. It was a question of fees; who was to pay the sexton and coffin-maker, and, above all, the parson? It is not much more than sixty years since Gilbert's Act was passed, charging upon the county rate the cost of burying bodies thrown up by the sea. They say the outcry about the *Susan* and *Rebecca* affair led Mr. Davies Gilbert to bring forward his measure. Wrecks are, happily, rarer now, thanks

to better lighthouses. Fancy the days when they used to burn turf in that old beacon fire-basket at the Lizard, and when a captain, sailing by and seeing no light, fired a shot just to wake up the slumbering keeper!

To me, the strangest thing of all is that sometimes, when there appears no hope, men do escape. So it was, just two years ago with the French schooner *Coquette*. Beating about in Mount's Bay, her sails split into ribbons, she went ashore on Halzaphron Cliffs. All gave themselves up for lost, and perhaps by daylight that wall of rock two hundred feet high would have terrified them all into inaction. As it was, one man said he would try to carry a line ashore, and, tying it round him, plunged into the boiling surf and disappeared. Long those on board waited for a signal; then there was a pull at the cord, and they knew that he at least was safe. The next thing was to haul ashore a rope, tied to the cord, and to fasten it securely to a rock. Along this, hand over hand, the captain and two men worked their way to land. The fifth, a boy, had his hands so numbed that he dropped off midway. His body came ashore, and his name is in the Gunwalloe register. The survivors were found huddled together in a cleft of the rock, by the coastguard men who had noticed the schooner in trouble, and had brought up their rocket apparatus. Had the vessel struck a few yards to right or left, the brave swimmer would have come ashore in vain; he would have been like a rat in a pail of water, unable to climb up. Just where she did strike there was a cleft up which he made his way, though how he could have done it in the darkness is indeed a wonder.

Halzaphron is supposed to be a corruption for *Als-ifarn*, "the cliff infernal," and it deserves the name; but what does Gunwalloe mean? *Winwaloe*, or *Gunwalloe*, was youngest son of Brychan, prince of Brecknock. Born in Brittany, whither his parents had gone about A.D. 450, to escape the fury of the Saxons, there he was trained to great holiness by the refugee bishop, St. Budoc (also a Cornish saint), and by-and-by founded the Abbey of Llandewednac, near Brest. After this he came over to Cornwall and founded another Llandewednac, close to the Lizard, becoming the patron-saint of the whole district; so that when a new church was built by the sisters it was naturally dedicated to him.

Not far inland from Gunwalloe is

Bochym, "the first and last gentleman's house in England," a place which was old in the time of Domesday Book, and which the De Bochymys held till one of them was ill-advised enough to join in Arundel's rebellion in 1549. This rebellion was an attempt to undo what Henry the Eighth had done. "Ten thousand stout traitors," as Norden calls them, demanded that the mass should be restored, half the abbey lands given back, holy water and holy bread respected, the law of the Six Articles carried out, and grievances redressed. This last was, doubtless, the main point. Whatever the monks might have been, they had been easy landlords, while the grantees of abbey lands laid on enormous rents and spent the money up in London. Moreover, commons began to be enclosed, so that the people could no longer have fuel and the grass of a cow for nothing. So there was plenty of discontent. The Commissioners, who were going through the country pulling down the images in the churches, were mobbed. At Helston one of them was stabbed; at Stamford Courtenay, near Exeter, the people forced the clergyman "to array himself in his old popish attire and go to mass after the manner of their forefathers." Arundel was governor of St. Michael's Mount, and seems to have been an energetic man. He besieged Exeter, destroyed the conduits, undermined the walls, and would have taken the city but for the desperate efforts of Lord Russell, who, having got the vast lands of Tavistock and Woburn abbeys, was specially mad at the thought of giving back church property. Lord Russell was joined by Lord Grey, with a body of Italian infantry, and the rebels were defeated on Cliff Heath, near Exeter (not Clifton Down, as some histories absurdly say). It was a fierce fight; Lord Grey, much used to foreign wars, said that "such was their valour and stoutness that he never, in all the wars that he had been in, did know the like." There was terrible hanging afterwards. Bochym and his brother suffered; and, of course, their land went from the family. The house was always kept up, however, as "a family mansion." The old fittings lasted till about 1814, when an unmitigated Goth, of the name of Graham, to whom the place had come by mortgage, used the fine old tapestry to wrap his furniture in, and packed up the stained glass in a basket, which he gave to a man on horseback to carry in to Helston, forgetting to say "with care," so that when it reached the town it was all broken to bits. No wonder,

when tapestry and glass got treated in that way, that Cornish crosses should be used for gate-posts, and the cap-stones of cromlechs turned into bridges, and the earth of hill forts carted away for dressing for the fields.

Bonithon, close to Bochym, and once a bigger place, has had quite a different fate. Instead of being restored, regardless of expense, it has sunk past restoration. It never seems to have changed hands; its owners joined in no rebellion; they were for the king in the Civil War, and thenceforth one of them seems to have been pretty constantly about court. But Sergeant Bonithon, steward of the Westminster Courts, "shot himself through the body with a pistol," is the entry in Narcissus Luttrell's diary (1705). Richard, his son, sold his estate in parcels, and, shutting himself up in his chambers, in Lincoln's-inn, burnt his papers and fell on his sword; "but, not dying speedily, he threw himself from the window, and so was killed" (1720). That was the end of an old Cornish family.

Not far from Bonithon, in Cury parish, stood, till quite lately, "Cury great ash tree," fourteen feet round—a respectable size anywhere, but specially remarkable here, where trees are rare indeed, and what are called trees are no bigger than up-country shrubs. This tree was the scene of most of the faction fights, the memory of which is still green in the Lizard country. They went on till quite lately. Thirty years ago it was not safe to go about after dark through Helston on a market-night. Wendron, and Breage, and Sithney, all "wrecking" villages in their time, remembered old quarrels and paid off old scores long after "wrecking" had come to an end. The great fight at Cury tree took place about a century ago, in the days when all ranks wrecked alike, and it happened thus. The Wendron men were coming back from a wreck, loaded with booty, when they were met by them of Breage hurrying down to see what they could get. Of course there was a fight; and such a furious one it was that, though the tree is gone, the battle is still remembered. It lasted on into the next day; and, among other cruel episodes, we are told that a Wendron man, severely wounded, and laid for safety on a stone hedge, was dragged down into the road by "wicked Prudy," a Breage termagant, who cried: "Ef thee arn't dead, I'd a mak thee," and kicked him to death with her patten-iron. Prudy got off scot-free;

indeed, a death in a faction-fight was looked on as a matter of course.

It is a wonderful change to have the life-boat instead of the wreckers' lame horse (driven "up and down cliff" with a lantern round its neck to tempt vessels ashore), and the prayer-meeting instead of the faction-fight. I wish they could have kept the wrestling and ball-play (hurling); perhaps they might have done so, if the "bettermost people" had gone (as they did of old) to look on; but when they left off going the "Cornish sports" fell into the pothouse-keeper's hands, and even the labouring men soon got ashamed of them. You know the Scilly story about the old woman, who murdered the half-drowned Sir Cloudesley Shovel for the sake of his diamond ring. Well, the Lizard has its like tale. A wrecker, prowling about the cliffs, saw a girl, with a fine ring on one of her fingers, clutching with the grasp of despair a projecting point of rock. He crawled to her, pulled out his knife, and cut her adrift, securing the ring finger. Let us hope this is not true. True it certainly is that the soldiers often had to be called out, so determined on plunder were the Lizard folks when a valuable cargo came ashore. All this is changed; and the Lizard people are getting quite modernised.

Two hundred and seventy years ago Camden complained that those to whom he wanted to talk would say: "Mee a navidra cowza Sauznech" (I can speak no English); it is nearly two hundred years since the then rector of Llandewednec preached the last sermon in Cornish. The miracle-plays lasted a little later, but the change went on rapidly. In 1776 an old man of threescore, who, when a boy, "did scarcely hear one word of English spoken," said that not more than four or five of his neighbours could speak any Cornish at all. In the Civil War a Royalist's diary says: "All beyond Truro they speak Cornish;" and King Charles's famous letter, "given at our camp in Sudley Castle," thanking the Cornish for "the more than great things done for us by them" (you may see it stuck up alongside of the Commandments in a good many Cornish churches), was translated and published in Cornish.

You will naturally expect something out of the common in a country which two hundred years ago had a different language from the rest of England. And, if wild legends and still wilder tales of storm and wreck satisfy you, you will not be disappointed in the Lizard country.

WASTED.

A STORY.

"POLLY is a mere child, Mr. Staunton; wait till you see my sister Florence. I'll give you leave to admire her; but Polly! Give Polly a box of bon-bons if you like, but don't go engaging her for every round dance. I declare, if you do, I'll send Miss Polly back by the next train, and write to mamma to tuck her dresses, and relegate her to the nursery again."

The speaker is Mrs. Saltoun, a beautiful young matron of three or four and twenty. The subject she is discussing with Mr. Staunton—the handsome, stiff, soldierly man opposite to her—is her sister Polly, a young girl of sixteen, fresh from the paternal country rectory, let loose from home for the first time.

Mr. Staunton laughs in a pleasant, half-embarrassed way; he is on very intimate terms with the beautiful young wife of his captain, and he does not mind her outspokenness, on the subject of his pronounced attentions to her sister, in the least. In spite of her threat to send Polly home if he will persist in dancing all the round dances with the child, he knows well that in her heart Mrs. Saltoun is far from ill-pleased at the turn affairs are taking.

"Polly may be only a child, but she's a remarkably nice child, and refreshes a fellow who has had a dose of the designing girls of the period. Come, Mrs. Saltoun, you must let her dance with me. I am a safe fellow, you know; other fellows would be sure to try humbug on with such a charming little girl."

Mrs. Saltoun heaves a sigh of mock resignation. "Oh my responsibilities!" she says. "Here am I burdened with the care of Miss Polly's well-being now, and with three small daughters of my own growing up in the nursery as fast as they can. Better give her the bon-bons, Mr. Staunton, and not insist on my taking her to the ball to-night."

Mr. Staunton shakes his head at the proposition, which is made in jest with an under-current of earnestness in it.

"I do insist," he says in a friendly, half-peremptory tone; "where is Polly now?"

"Putting puzzles together," her sister tells him mischievously, "or playing cat's-cradle with my housemaid, and wasting that functionary's time; or seeing how she'd 'look with her hair turned up and a bonnet on.' My dear Leonard," Mrs. Saltoun goes on with a sudden dash of earnestness, "let the child be a child still."

"You were engaged to Saltoun at sixteen?" he urges.

"Oh don't quote me!" she cries with a laugh; "it's all right with me, just because Phil is Phil. How he used to humour my sudden fancies and imaginary regrets! and how he looked after me, not leaving me to my own devices to pick up what friends and ideas I liked, as half you men do. Don't quote me; I am an exceptionally fortunate woman, and—you're not Phil."

She says these last words with a sudden solemnity that is foreign to her, and that causes him to look grave and to remain silent. Then she remembers that, after all, Leonard Staunton has not proposed marriage to Polly, and also that, up to the present, Polly is quite innocent of the knowledge that he is specially singling her out. Remembering these things, she says, with a swift return to her ordinary bright, gay manner:

"I believe I am going more than half way to meet trouble. You're rather fond of teasing, in your sober way, Leonard?"

"Well, put the question by for the time," he laughs. "What are your plans for the day? Are you going to hear the band?"

"I am going to ride; you may be my escort if you like."

"I shall be most happy," he says, slowly, with a lack of all flattering eagerness. Mrs. Saltoun is unaccustomed to have her gracious permission received in this way, and so she says, almost coldly:

"Don't feel yourself bound to go because I asked you——"

"Is Polly going?" he interrupts; and, at this plain betrayal of his feelings, Polly's sister cannot refrain anger against him, or refrain from laughing.

"No; Polly will remain at home, in her bed-room, trimming her first ball-dress all over with rosebuds—real ones, such beauties!"

"Extravagant Miss Polly; I know to my cost that rosebuds are of price."

"But they were sent to her; they are an offering from Mr. Carew."

"What! that red-throated, white-headed fellow, in the —th?"

"He is in the —th, but, as far as I can remember, he's not red-throated, and certainly he's not white-headed. What heresy to speak of his golden hair in that way."

"I don't think much of him," Staunton says; and then, as there is no prospect of seeing Polly, he takes himself away.

"I daresay you don't think much of him," Mrs. Saltoun murmurs, thought-

fully; "but, for all that, he's a warm-hearted, nice boy, who would love Polly better than himself, which you never will."

Just at this moment the theme herself comes into the room—a light-footed, slender-shaped girl of sixteen, with a sweet, gay child's face, and a pleasant, unaffected child's manner. Lying in a thick fringe over her forehead, and hanging in wavy masses down her back, hair of a red golden hue make an aureole around her. She has her hands full of rosebuds. Carew has been very liberal; having used all she wants for her dress, she has brought these to her sister.

"You careless child, how you're holding them, heads and tails together," Mrs. Saltoun says. "Thanks! these are for me, are they? Have you decorated yourself sufficiently in your own estimation?"

"I shall be wreathed in them to-night, Belle," the girl replies. "I wish to-night were come. Oh, Belle, I shall be wretched if I have to sit out and watch other girls dancing, and don't get any myself!"

"Oh, someone is sure to be good-natured enough to ask you."

"Mr. Carew will, I am sure," Polly rejoins.

"And I've no doubt but that Mr. Staunton will, Polly; he has been here this morning."

"Has he?" Polly says with superb indifference.

"Yes; are you sorry I didn't send for you?" the married sister asks.

"Oh no, Belle, I couldn't have come," the child answers freely. "I was about my dress, you know. I do hope it will look long enough behind." And with this expression of earnest feeling she passes away from the subject of Mr. Staunton.

Half-an-hour after this, Mrs. Saltoun, riding away from her house, casts an upward glance at the drawing-room window, where Polly lounges, watching her. The red golden hair is tangled, for she has been rolling on the floor with a puppy, and the bright child's face is dimpling all over with smiles that are evoked by nothing particular.

"Thank Heaven!" the young matron says, taking her horse away at a sharp trot, "Polly is a child still, with no thought of love or marriage in her head."

So thinking, she flings off all wearying thoughts of the responsibilities of her elder sisterhood. So thinking, she stays out many hours of that bright summer afternoon, enjoying her ride—stung by no consciousness of a violated charge—free from the oppressive influence of the knowledge that

she will have to come to a definite conclusion soon.

She stays out, beguiled by the beauty of the day, so long, that when she reaches home, hot and tired, she finds that dinner will be ready in a quarter of an hour, and that Phil is already dressed for it. In her eyes Phil is faultless. In other people's eyes, Phil's mania for punctuality is deemed a trifle less than a virtue. However, whatever it may be, Mrs. Saltoun has a respect for the quality, and reaches the table just as her husband is beginning to be impatient.

She is so breathless with the rapidity of her movements during the last ten minutes, that she does not notice Polly until dinner is nearly over, and she has detailed to her husband every incident of her ride. Then she turns to her sister, and is about to offer the latter a donkey-ride on Blackheath, when something in the child's face stops her.

"What is it?" she ejaculates. "Polly!"

The red-gold hair fringes the brow and hangs in wavy masses down her back, just as it did in the morning. But the free, happy child's face, and bright, unaffected child's manner have changed. She has been roused from the enchanted sleep of childhood; but whether it has been by the kiss of the genuine fairy prince or not, remains to be seen.

"I've something to tell you, Belle," she says, with a certain sort of tender outgoing of feeling towards her sister. And her lips quiver, and her eyes flicker and fill with tears in a way that makes Phil wonder "if the child has broken anything or not."

But his wife has no such dread as this on her mind, as she takes the young girl—a child no longer—back into the drawing-room, and asks, lovingly:

"Tell me, dear, is it Carew?"

And with choking sobs Polly stutters out: "No, Belle, no; it's Mr. Staunton."

"Has he been here?" Belle questions, indignantly.

"Yes, almost as soon as you left; and he has been so very, very kind, that I couldn't say No when he asked me if I would be his wife."

"Did you wish to say No?" the married sister asks, in an agony of spirit which she dares not quite reveal.

"No," Polly says, holding up a tear-stained face to be kissed. "I didn't want to say anything; I hadn't thought of him even till he came in and told me that he loved me very much, and that he'd like me to be his wife, that he might be able to take care of me; and then I remembered Aunt Helen and Aunt Grace,

and how grim, and dull, and cross they always seem, and mamma says that's because they have no husbands to love and take care of them, and so I said Yes. Fancy my being married before Florence, Belle! She'll come and stay with us both now, and I shall take her to balls."

As this view of the glories of her future state beams upon her, Polly's face glows with gratified vanity, and all her tears are dried up at once. The tears threaten to spring again when Mrs. Saltoun says:

"It won't be all balls and smooth sailing, Polly dear: remember, you will have days and weeks alone with him very often. Do you love him well enough to stand that?"

"It will be better than being like Aunt Helen and Aunt Grace, anyway," Polly says. And Mrs. Saltoun says resignedly:

"Well, there's nothing for me to do but to write to papa and mamma. I suppose Leonard will say something about it to me to-night?"

"Yes, Belle, he's written by to-night's post to papa. And now, hadn't I better go and dress?"

Mr. Staunton's letter is received by the paternal power in due time, pronounced to be a most straightforward and admirable one; and Polly—when practical arrangements for her comfort and security in the future have been made—is delivered up by her well-satisfied parents to the care and protection of Mr. Staunton for life. They come back after the wedding-tour, and even the most critical observers are bound to confess that the hastily-devised and carried-out scheme seems to promise well for Polly's happiness. For a year she is a popular, pretty, much-sought young matron, living in a whirl of glittering garrison-town gaiety. And her husband is proud of her, and tolerant of things as they are. At the end of that time excitement begins to tell its tale in the flushed cheek and sharpened outline of the face. A heavy, feverish cold attacks her; and, when she is recovering from the effects of this, her first child is born, and, by-and-by, it is a very weak and emaciated Polly who comes out into the world again.

Weariness and languor are her prevailing sensations now, and she does not know that her elastic young constitution has been overstrained, and that the utmost care is needed to restore it to its proper tension. She does not know, and there is no one to tell her, for Belle Saltoun is far

away by this time, and her husband confines his supervision of her health to requests that she "will take care of herself"—as if she knew how to do it!—and commands that she "does not allow the child to worry her." "She has a nurse; why should she keep a dog and bark herself?" he asks, when the poor languor-stricken mother toils about in vain, painful endeavour to keep the nursery peace. He also kindly suggests that "Polly should walk a good deal;" never taking into consideration that Polly's overtasked frame invariably falls a prey to utter fatigue and prostrating neuralgia, after she has tried his invaluable panacea "of a long walk."

Fortune, in one respect, has greatly favoured Mr. Staunton. He has come into a property which is sufficiently good to enable him to retire from the Service and buy a place in the country, where there is beautiful scenery, and little or no society. He is "sick of the hollowness of the world;" he assures his wife he "has had enough of it," and never cares for anything beyond the occasional companionship of one or two intimate friends, on whose fidelity he can rely. So poor Polly, who has not had "enough of it" by any means, and who married before she had been taught to rely upon herself at all in any emergency, stagnates and grows sad, and pines with a hot pining that scorches all interest out of her daily life for a "change," which, he candidly assures her, he shall not allow her to have. "A woman's sphere is home," he tells her; "and if she has not a wholesome desire to shine in that sphere, he will not indulge her in the unwholesome one of desiring to shine elsewhere."

Into the midst of their unsatisfactory Arcadia Mrs. Saltoun comes by-and-by; but, unfortunately, she only comes for a brief time. She, in her perfect happiness and content, is more beautiful and bright than ever; and Polly's husband feels a good deal of what he calls "justifiable annoyance," when he contrasts her younger sister, his wife, with still brilliant Belle. He complains to the latter that Polly mopes, and "looks tired when he comes in and wants her to amuse him." And when Mrs. Saltoun suggests that perhaps Polly is not well, he laughs at the notion.

"She has everything she wants, except excitement," he says, "and that she is better without." Then he repeats his phrase about a woman's proper sphere being her home. And Mrs. Saltoun calls

him a prig in her heart, but is powerless to help her sister.

A more utterly uninteresting being, as far as continuous intercourse with him goes, does not exist on this pleasant earth than Mr. Staunton. He is methodical, to an irritating degree, to every person who does not believe that he or she is graduating for perdition, if he or she has not a place for everything and everything in its place. He is punctual to the point of being raspingly ill-humoured, if he has to wait a moment for anything he has ordered at a certain time, even though fate and uncontrollable circumstances have intervened to cause the delay, and there has not been a particle of carelessness in the transaction. He fatigues himself pleasantly every day by hunting or coursing, shooting or fishing, in company with men who are like-minded to himself, and so are thoroughly congenial and acceptable associates to him. This being the case, slumber, as a rule, claims him for her own during the long hours that intervene between dinner and bedtime; and Polly's proper sphere is the home from which he is absent all day, and in which he only sleeps when he returns to it at night!

"If I were not a thoroughly quiet, well-disposed fellow, Polly is just the woman to drive me from my home," Mr. Staunton sometimes tells himself virtuously, when he wakes up from a prolonged and happy sleep to find poor Polly sitting motionless before the window or the fire, according to the season, gazing with a sad absent expression into the misty distance over the woods, or into the fiery vaults, in which she strives to picture possibilities that might have interested her and filled her heart. He is perfectly satisfied with himself and his manner of treating her. She has a handsome house, handsomely furnished, a good establishment, orders to "dress well, and let him have all the bills," and a pony-carriage to drive about in, when he doesn't want the pony. By day she has the society of her two baby children and their nurse—he dislikes country neighbours, and so insists on Polly confining herself to a round of mere formal visiting. By night she has the solace of her own thoughts, and the sight of him steeped in slumber on the most comfortable sofa in any room they may chance to be occupying! Nevertheless, surrounded as she is with all these aids to happiness, it is clear to everyone (but her husband) who sees her that Polly is not happy.

The solace of her own thoughts! Poor thing, the one centre round which her thoughts revolve happily is the old life at home, in the little rectory, which he has tried to teach her to despise. That is the one stage of her existence which has been suffered to come to perfection and live itself. Her childhood flourished and flowered, a bright, happy, natural, unstunted plant! But her girlhood was nipped in the bud, before it had been glorified by one touch of real romance. Her sister was right in feeling indignant with Mr. Staunton for having robbed the child of that time that is flooded "with the life's dull light that ne'er can shine again on stream"—he married Polly before she had tasted the joy and pain of the fever called "first love."

Mr. Staunton had a vast number of theories concerning Polly, and he propounded a great many of them to her sister Belle, whenever he saw the latter. One was, that retirement was good for his wife; another, that her brief experience of life had given her a taste for gaiety which he could not sufficiently condemn, though she never spoke about it! Another was, that a woman who was so systematically "silent as Polly was, when in the society of the most considerate of husbands," must either be burdened with a sulky temperament or a sorrowful secret.

"I think it's simply that she has nothing to say," Belle would answer sadly.

"Then you imply that your sister is stupid?"

"Not at all; but a woman, in order to speak well (and unless she speaks well she had better hold her peace), must have education, experience, and frequent intercourse with others who have also something to say on the same grounds——"

"Polly belongs to a class of society which presupposes that she has had these advantages," he interrupts.

"Society may presuppose what it pleases. She has had nothing of the kind," the elder sister says, bluntly. "You cut short her education at home, you did away with the possibility of her gaining any experience in the best school-house a woman can have—love—and you immure her here in the most stultifying of all atmospheres—comfortable solitude; how should Polly gain ideas? And even if they do spring up in

such poor soil, how is she to learn the art of expressing them in words?—from her babies or her nurses?"

"You forget that she has me?" he says, stiffly.

"She has you to tell her, when you're in the vein, of what you and your gun did upon the hills in India; and for current history you give her details of Ponto's lameness and the Loughborough Hunt. Polly has no memories, excepting of the sudden way in which you swooped down upon her, and asked her to marry you, before you had taught her what love was. Be thankful that she has not created hopes for herself."

"One would think I had wronged her," he says, discontentedly. "I! who have given her a good home, my name—everything I had to give, in fact."

"You robbed her of the period of illusion," the elder sister answers. "And a woman who skips that will always be looking vaguely for the 'missing link' between herself and happiness. You should have been contented with giving her the bon-bons, as I advised you, a little longer; you should have let her live to feel that the sun was brighter to her when someone comes, and to grow desperate over the possibility of not seeing him for twenty-four hours; in fact, you should have let her suffer and refine herself into womanhood, instead of jerking her into it as you did. Now all that remains for you is to bear your disappointment like a man, and save your daughters from the fate that overtakes plants that are forced into too early bloom. The child-wife is a pretty enough thing in fiction. In fact she is a sacrifice to the greedy vanity of the man who will gather the bud, though he knows, if he does so, it can never develope into the rose."

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